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HISTORY OF THE BABYLONIANS AND ASSYRIANS.¹

The work is, as the author intended it to be, "a compact, popular, and fairly comprehensive sketch of the history" of the Babylonians and Assyrians for all who are interested in the progress of civilization in its earliest stages. The author, a skilled teacher of history, has prepared it chiefly for the student of general history. His "references" in the back of the book are arranged under a series of headings for the purpose of directing the attention of the student to paragraphs or sections in different works bearing on the subject in order to guide him in a special investigation of important topics. The well-selected bibliography and the chronological summary, besides the effort to give the pronunciation of names, are clearly indicative of the purpose which the author had in mind. Through the excavations and decipherment of the past century such a vast amount of material for the history of these people has been amassed that it has become a difficult task to cover the subject in a work of limited size. The author in the compass of a single volume, conforming in size to the others published in the same series, has very admirably covered the ground.

In the front of the book a map of "the World of Oriental Antiquity" is to be found. While the exact locations of the cities south of Babylon are not fixed, it is now definitely known that Eridu or Abu-Shahrain must be placed on the west side of the Euphrates instead of the east.

Part I deals with the city states of Babylonia and their unification under Babylon to 200 B. C.; Part II, the rise of Assyria and its struggles with Kassite Babylonia; Part III, the ascendancy of Assyria; and Part IV, with the neo-Babylonian empire. Just why the author concluded his history of the "Babylonians" with the overthrow of Nabuna'id by Cyrus he does not say. While naturally foreign influence was greatly felt after the Achemenians began to rule, the indications are that the Babylonian people maintained their peculiar cultus for considerably more than a century afterward.

The part especially fascinating to most readers at this time is that which embraces the early period. The author seems to be one of the few who cling to the theory advanced by Halévy as regards the Sumerians. To those who believe that a non-Semitic population preceded the Semitic occupation of Babylonia, and that to the people they know as Sumerians belongs the credit for having introduced that which was so peculiarly highly developed of the fourth and fifth millennium B. C., this will be found to be a very serious defect of the first part of the book. A discussion of the question is here not in place. Let me, however, mention that among other proofs recently offered through Professor Hilprecht's investigations at Nippur, a very important one is to be found in the fact that the people that lived at Nippur prior to the recognized period of the Semitic occupation cremated their dead, traces of which

¹ A HISTORY OF THE BABYLONIANS AND ASSYRIANS. By George Stephen Goodspeed, Ph.D., Professor of Ancient History in the University of Chicago. Vol. IV of "The Historical Series for Bible Students," edited by Kent and Sanders.

wholly disappear after about 4000 B. C. Recognizing this people, the standpoint from which the history of this period is written is altogether different.

The work is written in a very lucid and readable style, and, while not intended for the specialist, is a most acceptable contribution to the literature on the subject in the English language, and should have its place on the shelves of every representative library.

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WRIGHT'S CATALOGUE OF SYRIAC MANUSCRIPTS.¹

Prior to 1632, there were no Syriac manuscripts in the libraries of Cambridge. In that year the Oriental manuscripts collected by Van Erpe were given to the University, among them being ten Syriac manuscripts, and the nucleus of the University's Syriac collection was thus formed. About the beginning of the eighteenth century three manuscripts from the collection of Robert Huntington were added to these, and a little later, in 1715, two Syriac manuscripts came into the library in the collection of Bishop Moore. Of the fifteen manuscripts thus gathered, two at least had disappeared by the year 1775, so that at the beginning of the nineteenth century there were little more than a dozen Syriac manuscripts in the University library. At the end of the century the collection numbered over two hundred. This great increase was largely due to the acquisition of two considerable collections; the manuscripts gathered by the Rev. Claude Buchanan in South India, in 1806-7, and by him presented to Cambridge; and those collected in 1842-4 in Mesopotamia and Kurdistan by the Rev. George Percy Badger, for the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which were presented by the Society to the Cambridge library in 1887. Besides these important groups of manuscripts, the Cambridge Syriac collection has been frequently enriched, especially in the past thirty years, through purchases, gifts, and bequests of manuscripts.

While the majority of these Cambridge manuscripts are later than the sixteenth century, there is a fair number from the thirteenth and fifteenth, and one, containing writings of Basil of Cæsarea translated from the Greek, from the tenth or eleventh. Of individual manuscripts there is not space to speak. Of the Van Erpe manuscripts, one restored writings of Jacob-bar-Salibi and Nicolaus of Damascus, reputed to be lost; and another was among the three collated for Walton's polyglot. One of the Moore manuscripts was used by Lee in preparing his edition of the New Testament. The Buchanan manuscripts have, despite their lateness, especial significance as representing Nestorian influence in South India, whence they came. The S. P. C. K. collection was examined

¹A CATALOGUE OF THE SYRIAC MANUSCRIPTS PRESERVED IN THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE. By the late William Wright, LL.D., with an Introduction and Appendix by Stanley Arthur Cook, M.A. Cambridge: *University Press*, Vols. I and II, 1901. xxx + 1290 pp.